

Town Council Meeting: 12 September 2011



Town of Garrett Park
PO Box 84
4600 Waverly Avenue
Garrett Park, MD 20896

Regular Meeting of Town Council
Garrett Park Town Hall
10814 Kenilworth Avenue
Garrett Park, MD 20896

Minutes

Call to Order: Mayor Keller called the meeting to order at 7:34 PM. Present were Council members Irons, Petito, Schulp, and Wegner. Also present was Administrator Pratt, Margaret Soltan of the *Bugle*, and a number of Town residents.

Approval of Agenda: The agenda was approved as posted without objection.

Presentations by Residents:

- Resident Gerilee Bennett reported on the Garrett Park Cooperative Nursery School's (Nursery School) renovations of the Community Center, noting that they were well under way, and close to schedule overall. There have been some delays, primarily due to a permit revision review by the County. Ms. Bennett stated that the Nursery School plans to move back into the Community Center before January, but the timing of resumption of nursery school classes at that location ultimately depends on the completion of the Garrett Park Elementary School (GPES) project.

Mayor's Report:

- Community Center: The Town is having the four large trees trimmed. Also, the Town is pursuing a "long shot" possibility of undergrounding the utilities to the building. Montgomery County may install a rain garden in the rear of the Community Center, at little or no cost to the Town.
- Storm damage: Town assets came through the storm well, with no flooding or Town trees downed. One tree fell that was questionably a Town tree and the Town has removed it. The Maintenance staff came in on Sunday immediately following Hurricane Irene to start the cleanup, but all told there was less than 20 hours of overtime.
- Pepco dealings: Pepco appears to have done a better job in the aftermath of recent storms. There were fewer and shorter outages, and better communication with the public and the Town.

- Post Office update: On August 16, the Mayor attended a Congressional briefing on US Postal Service system-wide financial difficulties; there was little specific to Garrett Park. Congressman Chris Van Hollen's staff has arranged a meeting with Post Office officials on September 16 at the Congressman's district office to discuss expressly the Garrett Park Post Office, proposed Saturday retail counter closing, its finances, and the effect of curtailed hours on profitability.

Councilmember's Reports on Areas of Responsibility

- Archives Committee: Mayor Keller reported on behalf of Councilmember Mandel that they had both attended the recent Archives Committee meeting and are impressed with the progress that has been made using the new computer and software recently purchased for the Archives. The Mayor noted that the Committee was working on a more detailed written report to the Council on its activities.
- Councilmember Irons reported that the Garrett Park Conservation Action Network (GPCAN) would be in the Post Office on Saturday, October 1, to help residents understand their various energy bills, sign residents up for wind energy, and suggest other ways to conserve energy. Councilmember Irons also announced that there would be a tour of recently-installed Garrett Park rain gardens on Sunday, October 16.
- Councilmember Wegner reported on the difficulty in getting the State Highway Administration (SHA) to repair the Strathmore/Keswick crosswalk - specifically the deteriorating brick surface and the imbedded roadway lights; he noted that the latter had been installed as an experimental design. He reported that a sight-limited town resident that frequently uses this crossing has contacted SHA in an effort to get this problem resolved. Resident Todd Harris suggested changing to flashing yellow lights on signs rather than the imbedded crosswalk lights.

Approval of Minutes:

- Councilmember Schulp **MOVED**
That the minutes of the 06/13/2011 Regular Council Meeting be approved as reviewed and distributed. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Petito and **PASSED** unanimously.
- The approval of the minutes of the 07/11/2011 Regular Council Meeting was deferred until the October Council meeting.

Action/Discussion:

- Capital Projects Update - Mayor Keller reported that on Friday the Town had gone out to bid for the Kenilworth/Oxford sidewalks and the North Kenilworth and Argyle curb and gutter installation, and that three sets of bid documents had been requested already. Bids are due at the Town Office

by 4:00 PM on Monday, October 3rd. In an effort to expedite the construction process the Town has offered a bonus for every day less than 45 days from the order to proceed, and a penalty for each day over 60 days. The Mayor also told the Council that the Town expects to go out to bid on the Shelley Court and North Kenilworth storm drains before the end of the month.

- Variance Opinion, 4700 Waverly Ave. – Mayor Keller noted that all Council members have now responded on this matter, and that he will consolidate their comments into a rough draft which he will send to Town Attorney David Podolsky. Attorney Podolsky's draft will be circulated for Council review prior to a formal vote next month.
- Land Use Ordinance amendments prioritization – Councilmember Irons reviewed a written outline that she had circulated to the Council, regarding prioritization of Council action in response to the Land Use Task Force (LUTF) report. She noted that there is a range of issues of various complexity, some straight-forward and others needing additional work; many of the issues are interrelated with each other and with both the County Overlay District and the County's ongoing revision of its own zoning code. Councilmember Irons stated that she hopes to get from the Council a sense as to how they wish to approach the remaining work on this matter, and suggested that the first 3 bullets in the report would be more easily and quickly dealt with, an example being the County exemptions for projections which are not yet incorporated into our ordinances. These exemptions should be reviewed individually (currently all are being applied) in policy) to see which best apply to Garrett Park.

Councilmember Schulp stated that he would like a review of the 18% limit on main building lot coverage, preferring that it be increased to 20%. Councilmember Irons replied that this matter needs further review as the LUTF had not reached agreement on it. Councilmember Wegner stated that he would like the Council to meet with the Setback Advisory Committee (SAC), and that changing main building lot coverage from the current 18% to 20% needs to be looked at by a larger group than the Council.

Mayor Keller suggested the Council Work Session scheduled for September 28th could be devoted to discussing these issues. There was discussion of scheduling conflicts and the Mayor will try to reschedule at a more convenient date, probably consolidating such a meeting with the SAC briefing (see below).

Resident Todd Harris expressed concern about the hardship variance for small lots in the Town Code that allowed lot coverage up to 25%, as this was no longer allowed by County. There was a long discussion about the relationships between the Town's Code, County Zoning policy, and the Garrett Park Overlay District.

Councilmember Petito said that, as other council members had suggested, the next step should be to meet with SAC and clarify Overlay Zone issues. Councilmember Irons agreed to contact the SAC to find out their availability to meet with the Council, and to develop a draft list of issues that involve the Overlay Zone for referral to Town Attorney Podolsky.

- Appointment of Rebecca Rawls to Archives Advisory Committee - Mayor Keller asked the Council to ratify his appointment.

Councilmember Wegner **MOVED**

That the Council ratify Mayor Keller's appointment of Rebecca Rawls to the Archives Advisory Committee. Councilmember Petito seconded the motion, which was **PASSED** unanimously.

Town Administrator Report:

- FY 2011 EOY Report, Monthly Financial Report, and Permits Report: Administrator Pratt reviewed these reports with the Council.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 9:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

[TOWN SEAL]

Edwin Pratt, Jr.

Edwin Pratt, Jr., Clerk-Treasurer